

To: Matt Cherry, President and Members of City Council

From: Wade Kapszukiewicz, Mayor

Subject: Appointments to the Arts Commission of Greater Toledo

1/23/2018

I Recommend the Following Reappointments to the Arts Commission of Greater Toledo

New Appointee	Appointee Replaced	Proposed Term of Office	Section 61 waiver as a special engagement	Reserved / Type	Slot	Recommended by (if applicable)	Attendance Record	Resume attached
Ramona Collins	Libbey Call Best	1 year expiring on 12/31/2018	No			Mayor	N/A	Yes
Kristin Kiser	Sandra Blackstone Carman	1 year expiring on 12/31/2018	No			Mayor	N/A	Yes
Kate Kelley	Troy Dowling	3 years, expiring on 12/31/2020	No			Mayor	N/A	Yes
Kathleen Merrill	Claire Kirsner	3 years, expiring on 12/31/2020	Yes			Mayor	N/A	Yes
Rhonda Sewell	Margy Trumbull	3 years, expiring on 12/31/2020	Yes			Mayor	N/A	Yes


Wade Kapszukiewicz
Mayor

Bio - Ramona Collins

Ramona Collins is a premier entertainer who was born in Toledo OH but grew up in Lansing MI. Based in Toledo since 1969, she worked day gigs until retiring two years ago from her job with the State of Ohio. She is the mother of 5 adult children, 14 grandchildren, and 7 great grandchildren. Always considered an activist, during her time as a state employee Ramona was a union steward, chief steward, president of her local Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (OCSEA) AFSCME chapter, served on two contract negotiation teams, and two arbitration and pre-discharge review committees. She currently serves on the executive board for her union.

Long established as a singing entertainer in Toledo and the Midwest, Ramona wears many hats as a recording artist, songwriter, actress, emcee, radio host, community activist and all-around carrier of the jazz torch in her community. She has organized many events over the years and been recognized for her efforts. Audiences throughout the Midwest have known for some time that this singing entertainer, recording artist, songwriter, educator, mentor, actress, radio host and emcee is one of the region's true music treasures. Known primarily as a jazz singer, she also performs blues, R&B, big band music, gospel, doo wop and a little rock and country.

Although she always sang and performed her shows over the years while she worked a day job, she managed to establish herself as a premier entertainer in the Midwest and beyond. She is an audience favorite at clubs, concerts and festivals wherever she goes and covers all the flavors from honey to hot sauce, whether she is half of a duo or fronting an orchestra. She is considered the real deal.

Ramona views her performing career as part entertainment, part educational. To that end, she has taken aspiring young performers under her wing, supporting, educating and encouraging them and has conducted several master classes on stage performance, one at Oakland University in 2016, the other at the Berklee College of Music in Boston in 2005. "There are a number of young people who have talent and respect for jazz," she says. "I'm thrilled they view me as a mentor...it's inspiring." Toledo is the hometown of jazz legends Art Tatum and Jon Hendricks and it is great to know that we have young people who are interested in carrying the jazz baton that is being passed to them. We have to keep jazz alive in Toledo.

She has recorded two independent albums, "Everything Old Is New Again" and "Live & Lovin' It", which are available for download on cdbaby.com. She is the guest vocalist on the Toledo Jazz Orchestra cd "Out Of Nowhere". Ramona is currently working on original material for her next recording project. Her most recent original piece is a song called "Temporary Home" that she wrote for a benefit for the Aurora House.

Chris Hovan, photographer and jazz writer/reviewer for "All That Jazz" said, after first seeing her performance at the 2001 Ford Detroit International Jazz Festival, "*... with her robust approach and sparkling personality, Ramona Collins is a regional artist worthy of wider recognition.*"

Body of Work

Awards

- 2002 - Milestones Honoree – first honoree in the Arts Category
- 2011 – Nominated for best Jazz Vocalist – Detroit Black Music Awards
- 2014 - Designated a Motown Ambassador by Duane Parham CEO of Educational Arts, Music & Talk Radio, Detroit MI
- 2015 – Best Of Toledo winner in Singer category
- 2016 – Best of Toledo winner in Blues/Jazz category
- 2017 – Nominated for Best of Toledo Blues/Jazz category

Currently sits on the following boards or committees or panels:

- Founding member – Women of Toledo Inclusive
- Founder – Maryann Russo Scholarship Event “Songs For Our Sister” (10 years)
- Member – Toledo Public Schools Broadcasting Arts Advisory Committee
- Board Member – University of Toledo School of Visual and Performing Arts
- Secretary – Black Swamp Blues Society
- Sponsor/committee person – Great Lakes Jazz Festival
- Member – Music Uniting Sisters Everywhere (MUSE)
- Member – UTMCR Ryan White Program “Reviving The Red Ribbon” Committee
- Recurring panelist – Full Circle Podcast

Past Service – Organizations, Boards or Committees

- President – Toledo Jazz Society (responsible for renaming former annual jazz festival for Art Tatum)
- Member - Toledo School For The Arts Tech Advisory Board
- Artistic Director – 2016 Forrester’s “Jazz On The River” Music Series
- Artistic Director – 2015 “Hot Glass, Cold Beer, Cool Music” series @ Gathered Glassblowing Salon

Annual events

- It’s Friday @ Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo OH
- Jazz In Paradise – Farmington Hills MI
- Jazz In The Garden @ Toledo Botanical Garden
- Jazz On The Green @ Gesu Church, Toledo OH

Clubs

- Baker’s Keyboard Lounge – Detroit MI
- Bert’s Jazz Club – Detroit MI
- Bird of Paradise – Ann Arbor MI
- Bob Stop – Cleveland OH
- Carr Center – Detroit MI
- Cliff Bell’s Jazz Club – Detroit MI
- Collingwood Arts Center – Toledo OH
- Degage Jazz Club – Maumee OH

- Detroit Steinway Gallery – Commerce Charter Twp MI
- Dirty Dog Jazz Café – Grosse Pointe MI
- Dizzy's Club Coca Cola – New York NY
- Harbor House – Detroit MI
- Jazz @ The Elks – Plymouth MI
- Joe's Top Dog – Dearborn MI
- Kerrytown Concert House – Ann Arbor
- Lansing Community College – Lansing MI
- Lennox Lounge – New York NY
- Lily Pearl's Lounge – Owosso MI
- Michigan State University – East Lansing MI
- Moriarty's Pub – Lansing MI
- Murphy's Place – Toledo OH
- Music Hall for the Performing Arts – Detroit MI
- Nikola's Restaurant – Southfield MI
- NINE Restaurant – Toledo OH
- Paula Brown's Put – Toledo OH
- Real Seafood – Toledo OH
- Registry Bistro – Toledo OH
- Rush Street Night Club – Ann Arbor MI
- Rusty's Jazz Café – Toledo OH
- Savage Hall – Toledo OH
- Slater's Pub – Port Clinton OH
- Small's Jazz Club – New York NY
- Smoke Jazz Club – New York NY
- Stella's Restaurant – Perrysburg OH
- Toledo Club – Toledo OH
- Valentine Theater – Toledo OH
- Ye Olde Durty Bird – Toledo OH

Festivals

- Detroit Jazz Festival, Detroit MI
- Defiance Jazz Festival, Defiance OH
- Old Town Jazz Festival – Lansing Michigan
- Ypsilanti Heritage Festival – Ypsilanti MI
- Toledo African American Festival
- Michigan Jazz Festival
- Summer Solstice Jazz Festival
- Kimmie Horne Jazz Festival

Kristin Kiser

Kristin is the Senior Director of Digital Strategy at Communicica, a full-service marketing, advertising and public relations agency with 5 locations in addition to the Headquarters in Toledo, Oh. Before joining Communicica, Kristin was a managing partner and co-founder of AVATAR, a web and software development company based in Toledo. At Communicica, her responsibilities include setting strategic direction and development of digital marketing integration for a broad range of clients. In addition, she serves as the director of development, planning and management for all of the agency's web initiatives.

She has helped to design online strategies and support for a broad array of clients, including: Gerber Technology, BASF, MTS Seating, Spangler Candy Company, Hiedtman Steel, Tronair, Hercules Tire, and Gallagher-Kaiser, among others.

She is currently seated on the board for Toledo Grows and held a position on the Executive Committee of the Toledo Botanical Garden prior to and through the merger with Metroparks of Toledo. Additionally she sits on the Advisory Council of Gulf Coast Literary Journal in Houston Texas.

In her personal time, she focuses on spending time with her family, traveling and participating in community events and initiatives. Additionally, she owns local coffee shop, Black Kite Coffee.

► Kate L. Kelley

Financial Planner
Eagle Strategies, LLC / New York Life Insurance Co.
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Toledo, OH 43604
Phone: 419.450.6737
E-mail: kkkelley@eaglestrategies.com
Website: www.katelkelley.com



Current Board Activities:

Toledo Warehouse District Association

Board Member 2012- Present

Founded in 1981, the Association's mission is to benefit businesses, institutions, property owners, residents, and visitors by promoting socioeconomic stability and growth and encouraging the preservation and appreciation of the neighborhood's diversity and history.

My role on the board is to attend and record minutes for all monthly member and board meetings, as well as coordinate various member and potential member events to help highlight the neighborhood and increase membership within the organization. I also serve as a liaison between the Association and residents and local business owners.

Toledo Animal Shelter

Board Vice President 2013- Present

Since its founding in 1927, the shelter's mission is to care for and to provide temporary and indefinite shelter and care for homeless and abandoned dogs and cats by promoting and sponsoring animal welfare education programs, adoptions, preventive veterinary care, and a mandatory spay/neuter program, with emphasis on a "no kill" policy for its animals.

As the Vice-President, my responsibilities include filling in for the President as needed and discussing current and future needs of the shelter. We meet quarterly to review all finances, policies, by-laws, staffing, maintenance, and any upcoming projects, fundraisers, and operational issues.

Advocating Opportunity

Board Member 2017- Present

A.O. is only one of four programs in the country which provides comprehensive, holistic, trauma-responsive legal and social services to men and women, minors and adults, and U.S. Citizens and foreign-born persons who have experienced sex or labor trafficking. They also provide support for families to ensure that trafficked and exploited persons have a stable home environment.

**Park Smart (formerly Downtown Toledo Parking Authority)
Board Member 2013- 2017 (discontinuation of board)**

The purpose of Park Smart is to plan, market, manage, and operate the City of Toledo parking assets, including the Vistula, Superior Street, Port Lawrence garages, and the on-street parking meters located in downtown Toledo.

As one of thirteen board members, my role was to represent the business owners and residents of the Warehouse District, as well as assist with marketing and promotion of the parking facilities downtown. The board met monthly to review budgets, plan for maintenance and construction of new parking facilities.

Other Activities:

Arts Commission of Greater Toledo

Honorary Chair – The MIX Overboard 2013

The Arts Commission serves Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan to develop and promote visual, performing, and literary arts. The organization's mission includes youth programming, and programs that explore opportunities for economic development and revitalization.

My role for the ACGT's signature spring fundraiser included; selecting and preparing the Commodore Perry space (including hands-on cleaning, painting, working with contractors, etc.) to ensure the space is ready, as well as solicited sponsorship from various organizations and individuals. I also helped solicit raffle donations from local businesses.

Toledo Animal Shelter Auxiliary

Chairperson – A Celebration of Food and Wine 2012-present (annual)

This annual fundraiser has been increasingly successful. This small event raised \$3,500 for the shelter our first year, increasing each year up to \$6,000 in 2017.

Additional Information:

I relocated to Toledo from downtown Baltimore in 2005. I have worked as a retirement planner for the past 18 years. My hobbies include volunteering with various charitable organizations and non-profit events. I also enjoy biking, running, CrossFit and teaching group fitness classes at the Downtown YMCA.

Kathleen McCreery Merrill

4369 Indian Road
Ottawa Hills, Ohio 43615
419-902-1778 (mobile)
kathleen.merrill@gmail.com

Experienced leader, negotiator, marketer

Vice President, Marketing Communications - ProMedica - Toledo, OH 7/07 to present

- Built rebranding initiative the health system through research and development of a clear brand identity.
- Manage 45+ person in-house marketing/communications department to meet system's strategic goals on time and within budget for more than 1,500 annual campaigns and projects.
- Manage multi-million dollar annual communications and marketing budget.
- Primary contact and project lead for full-service advertising agency.
- Develop strategic, annual marketing and communications plans across health system, including 13 hospitals, physician practices and multiple business units.
- Negotiate partnerships/sponsorship contracts with regional organizations, including shopping centers, sports facilities, etc.
- Negotiate media buys including print, electronic and digital media for reaching new patients, physician recruitment and retention, building loyalty among existing patients, and educating communities on services offered.
- Promoted five times in 10 years.
- Every employee review marked as exemplary employee by manager.

Marketing Services Contractor - Toledo, OH 8/99 to 7/08

- Through existing and new business relationships, serviced a variety of local and national businesses as a part time, long term marketing contractor.
- Services included:
 - strategic marketing proposals
 - media planning and negotiation
 - copywriting
 - special event planning
 - sales presentations
 - marketing research integration
- Account industries/markets included: technology publications; technology companies, advertising agencies; hospitality business; higher education; local not-for-profits; health care and physician practices; and architectural firm.

Director of Customer Marketing - UBM Tech (was CMP Media) - Manhasset, NY 8/95 to 7/99

- Managed nine-person marketing and research team for three publications, two online products and national sales team.
- Strategic development of integrated marketing proposals for technology companies.
- Planned, developed, trained and launched for a customer-centered selling model.
- Allocated multi-million annual marketing and research budget.
- Branded publication to advertisers and readers through multi-pronged marketing efforts
- Integrated publications' marketing research (qualitative and quantitative).
- Developed sales tools and presentations for sales team.
- Project lead with internal creative department and external advertising agencies.
- Coordinated special events.

Kathleen McCreery Merrill

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Ottawa Hills, Ohio 43615
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Community Outreach Specialist -Coalition on Child Abuse - Garden City, NY 8/94 to 8/95

Account Executive - Hart (full service advertising agency) - Maumee, OH 6/90 to 7/94

Account Executive - *Monroe Evening News* – Monroe, MI 6/88 to 6/90

Education

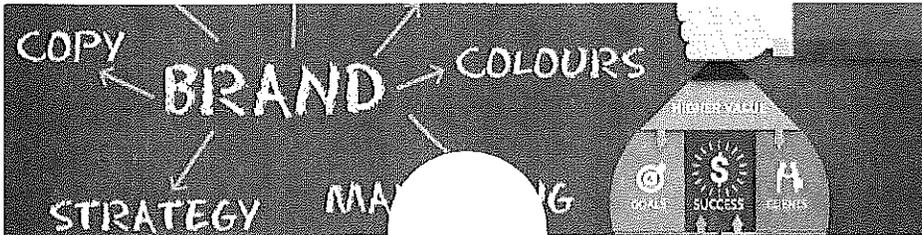
Michigan State University - East Lansing, MI

Graduated 6/88

Bachelor of Arts: Advertising, Communications Arts & Sciences

References available upon request.

Johns Hopkins Online - Museum Master's & Digital Curation Certificate. Flexible & Online. Ad ...



Kathleen Merrill · 2nd

Brand advocate. Team leader. Innovative marketer.

ProMedica · Michigan State University

Toledo, Ohio Area · 500+ [Connections](#)

Connect

More...

Highlights



6 Mutual Connections

You and Kathleen both know Rita Mansour, Heather Allred, and 4 others

Experience



Vice President, Marketing Communications

ProMedica

Jul 2007 – Present · 10 yrs 7 mos

Toledo, Ohio Area

- Identify market opportunities and build strategic marketing plans that provide measurable, effective results for organization.
- Hands on management of 30-person marketing and communications division for northwest Ohio's largest health system. (13 hospitals, 15,000 employees and more than 800 employed physicians)
- Leverage full range of marketing tactics to achieve goals including digital and traditional advertising, community partnerships, public relations, special events, business to business presentations and direct mail.
- Team lead for organization's re-branding initiative that was initiated through consumer research and market perception studies and then put into practical implementation and evaluation.
- Develop cohesive messaging with multitude of community partnerships and sponsorships.
- Build, manage and allocate department's multi-million dollar annual budget.
- Lead for health system's advertising agencies and other marketing partners.
- Integrate primary and secondary research into meaningful, market perspective for executive team and sales team.

I was hired in mid-2007 as Regional Director, promoted to Corporate Director in 2009, to Associate Vice-President in 2012, and recently named Vice President.

Marketing/Communications Consultant

Self-employed

Jul 1999 – Jul 2007 · 8 yrs 1 mo

Based in Toledo, Ohio

Wide range of clients that were generated from referrals and relationships in prior positions. Built reputation as hard-working marketer who could collaborate with internal team and external partners (agencies) to surpass a specific marketing goals by developing detailed plans for a specific product, service or business unit.

• Services included:

Contact and Personal Info

Kathleen's Profile and Websites

Show more

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- ▶ One-on-one investment help
- ▶ Choices for growth, income, or both



Get Started

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Learn the skills Kathleen has

Advanced Branding

Viewers: 21,064

Crisis Communication

Viewers: 37,341

Social Employees: The New Marketing Channel

Viewers: 10,968

See more courses

Promoted



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Accounting Masters Online 100% Online and Prepares You for the CPA Exam. Learn More

Messaging



- o strategic marketing proposals
- o public relations
- o media planning and negotiation
- o copywriting
- o special event planning
- o sales presentations
- o marketing research integration

• Account industries/markets included: technology publications; technology companies, advertising agencies; hospitality business; higher education; local not-for-profits; health care and physician practices; and architectural firm.



Marketing Director

UBM Tech

Jun 1995 – Jun 1999 • 4 yrs 1 mo

Was CMP Media.

- Managed nine-person marketing and research team for three publications, two online products and national sales team.
- Strategic development of integrated marketing proposals for technology companies.
- Planned, developed, trained and launched for a customer-centered selling model.
- Career growth at CMP Media included:
 - Computer Reseller News, Director of Marketing
 - Computer Reseller News, Marketing Manager
 - Computer Reseller News, Promotions Manager



Account Executive

Hart Associates

Jun 1989 – Aug 1994 • 5 yrs 3 mos

Served as an account executive for local advertising agency. Clients ranged from health care to education to small businesses. Worked closely with agency departments to develop marketing plans and ideas. Managed clients' budgets and revenue targets.

Retail Advertising

Monroe Evening News

1988 – 1989 • 1 yr

Education



Michigan State University

Bachelor of Arts, Advertising, School of Communications Arts and Sciences

1984 – 1988

Activities and Societies: Michigan State News - Set highest sales record in 1987.

Featured Skills & Endorsements

Marketing Comm... • 37

Endorsed by 5 of Kathleen's colleagues at ProMedica

Advertising • 30

Endorsed by Mike Bell and 2 others who are highly skilled at this

Endorsed by 12 of Kathleen's colleagues at ProMedica

Marketing Strategy • 21

Endorsed by Cid Merrill, who is highly skilled at this

Endorsed by 9 of Kathleen's colleagues at ProMedica

See 34 more skills ~

Recommendations

Received (1)

Given (0)

Kevin Mannion

Kathleen was always creative, conscientious, and an absolute



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October 24, 2011 (Event) was senior to Kathleen but didn't manage directly

Accomplishments

9 Honors & Awards

BRONZE TELLY AWARD • ADDY • HEALTHCARE MARKETING AWARDS • SILVER COMMUNICATOR AWARDS • Aster Award • SILVER INDUSTRY ADVERTISING AWARDS • CANCER AWARENESS ADVERTISING AWARDS • DAVEY AWARDS • ADDY - Regional Silver

Interests



Healthgrades
8,362 followers



Advertising Pros
126,503 members



Influence Health
2,818 followers



brandsymbol
3,607 followers



Michigan State University
376,220 followers



The Tribune
373 followers

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Select Language

English (English)

Rhonda B. Sewell

Biography

Rhonda B. Sewell was promoted two years ago to the newly created role of Manager, External and Governmental Affairs. She was hired by the Library in 2006 initially as the system's Media Relations Coordinator, followed by a position as Governmental Affairs and Media Strategist.

Rhonda was born in Bowling Green, Ohio and reared in Toledo. She attended St. Angela Hall Elementary School, Byrnedale Junior High School and completed ninth-grade at St. Ursula Academy in Toledo, before moving with her family to Ann Arbor, MI. She graduated from Ann Arbor Pioneer High School in 1984.

She joined the Toledo Library system after a noted 18-year career as a journalist at *The Blade*, the daily newspaper in Toledo, OH. Before joining *The Blade*, Rhonda worked for one year as a general assignment reporter at *The Lansing State Journal*, in Lansing, MI while completing her senior year at Michigan State University (MSU). Rhonda received her B.A. in Journalism from Michigan State University in 1989.

She was hired at age 21 at the Toledo daily newspaper after attending the City University of London (via Michigan State University's Overseas Study Program) in 1988 where she completed graduate coursework in international journalism. Shortly after joining *The Blade*, Rhonda was requested to represent the company as an international correspondent and was sent to England, Italy, France, Belgium, Switzerland, and The Netherlands. Rhonda's newspaper career was primarily in the Features department, where she served for a decade as *The Blade's* Fashion Writer and frequently traveled to New York to cover major fashion events, awards ceremonies, and conduct designer interviews with the likes of Donna Karan, Kenneth Cole, Yves Saint Laurent, Anna Wintour, and Marc Jacobs. Rhonda also worked as the American Fashion Correspondent for CLEO Magazine, a former publication based in Cairo, Egypt.

During her *Blade* career, Rhonda interviewed countless prominent figures such as author Maya Angelou, singer Usher, the late Dana Reeve, Yves Saint Laurent, and many others. In the 1990s, she also served as a part-time instructor at Bowling Green State University (BGSU), where she taught a self-designed course titled, "Ethnic Groups and Mass Media." For two semesters in 2012 and 2013, Rhonda also taught a course titled "Journalism in a Democratic Society" via BGSU's

Department of Journalism and Public Relations. During her *Blade* career, Rhonda also served as a talk show host on Toledo's PBS station, WGTE PBS Channel 30, where she now volunteers as a program moderator to help introduce important segments and documentaries whenever requested. Rhonda frequently served as a co-host on "The Editors," *The Blade's* former political and community TV talk show, and as an emcee for many *Blade* events.

Rhonda is active in numerous community organizations. The list below contains her current and former activities:

- Chair, Board of Directors of the Toledo Children's Hospital Foundation
- Immediate Past Co-Chair, African American Leadership Council of United Way (Pitched an early literacy and mentoring program for African American boys titled Real Men READ-y, which is now in its 5th year for AALC)
- Immediate Past President, The Northwest Ohio Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America, Inc. (Former Director-at-Large/Advocacy Chair and Membership Chair/Vice President)
- Governmental Advocacy regular presenter, State Library of Ohio
- Media and Communications Planning Team, Urban Libraries Council
- Media Relations Workshop regular presenter, Ohio Libraries Council
- Momentum 2017 and 2018 Planning Committee Member, Arts Commission of Greater Toledo
- 2017/2018 Promenade Park Lily Pad structure quotes committee, Arts Commission of Greater Toledo
- 2013 Sidewalk Poetry Project Planning Committee, Arts Commission of Greater Toledo
- Member of the Toledo Press Club
- 2014 and 2013 Campaign Cabinet member for the United Way of Greater Toledo
- Former Editorial Board member for ProMedica's *Your Health* publication
- Regular Judge, ABLE/LAWO Access to Justice Awards
- Lead 2014 TPS Levy Campaign Steering Committee member, and 2013 Co-Chair of the Toledo Public Schools Levy Steering Committee
- 2014 and 2013 judge of the *20 Under 40* Awards
- 2014 Leadership Mentor, The Center for Nonprofit Resources
- 2014 African American Women's Health/Wellness Committee, ProMedica

- Technology Chair/Nominating Committee/Arts Committee, Toledo Chapter of The Links, Inc. (member since 1991)
- Immediate Past Lead Teen Advisor, Toledo Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. (member since 2004)
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated (Initiated in 1995)
- Charter/award-winning member of the former Northwest Ohio Black Media Association, a National Association of Black Journalists affiliate, and the Ohio Newspaper Women's Association.

In her past work in the community, Rhonda volunteered for the former Greater Toledo Urban League, where in 2010 she Co-Chaired the organization's Centennial Banquet featuring then League national president Marc Morial as keynote speaker, and in 2011 she served as General Chair of the organization's 14th Annual Dinner.

Rhonda has been recognized for her tireless community volunteerism and work at the Library:

- 2017, YWCA of Northwest Ohio Milestone for Women Awardee (Volunteerism category)
- 2017, Asked to serve on U.S. Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur's Advisory Committee for High School teens entering military service – Camp Perry
- 2016, Jefferson Awards Foundation Certificate of Excellence for Outstanding Community Service (Top 15 2016 Jefferson Awards Finalist)
- Promoted in 2015 by the Library to the newly created position of Governmental Affairs and Media Strategist, then to Manager, External and Governmental Affairs
- 2013, received the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major Award by the Toledo alumni chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
- 2012, named an Emerging Leader by the African American Legacy Project
- 2008, recipient of the Rabbi Morton Goldberg Community Service Award, presented by the City of Toledo's Board of Community Relations
- A multiple award-winner of the Ohio Newspaper Women's Association; the National Association of Black Journalists, and she received a Media Achievement Award from the former Northwest Ohio Black Media Association in 2007

- Nominated for the 2008 Jack and Jill of America, Inc. “Distinguished Mother of the Year” award by the members of the Toledo Chapter, and received an Outstanding Lead Teen Advisor award in 2016

Rhonda has formerly served on the Board of Directors of the YWCA of Greater Toledo; The Toledo Ballet; The Media Foundation Board of the Independent Collegian Newspaper at the University of Toledo; The Art Tatum African American Resource Center at Kent Branch Library; The American Heart Association of Greater Toledo, and MADD Poets Society.

Rhonda resides in Sylvania, OH with her twin daughters, Sarah and Savannah, age 17, who are honor roll students in their Senior year at Southview High School, and the family’s rescue dog Oliver, age 2, a terrier mix from Planned Pethood. She is currently at work on several projects, including a children’s book with local celebrated portrait artist Leslie Adams, about the story of Willa B. Brown, America’s first Black female licensed pilot. The late pilot is Rhonda’s maternal cousin. Rhonda is also at work on a Web site to promote her paternal cousin, the late journalist Ethel L. Payne, one of the first black women to cover the White House press corp and *the* first black woman employed by a major TV network (CBS) to host a program. Payne is often referred to in history books as “The First Lady of the Black Press” and is featured on a U.S. postage stamp.

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